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CHALLENGE

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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MARCH ON THE DNC

DON'T VOTE, ORGANIZE!

Marching at the Genocidal National Convention calling out the liberal rulers fascist (see glossary on page 6) support of Israel. CHALLENGE revolutionary communist paper was everywhere

CHICAGO, August 23 – Dozens of members of the communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) wrapped up a powerful summer project this afternoon, after nearly five straight days and nights in action against the capitalist bosses' system of genocide, fascism and war. PLP comrades, ranging from the newly recruited to veteran members with decades of experience, traveled from across the country to directly challenge the liberal Big Fascist U.S. bosses as they held their Democratic National Convention (DNC) here.

Our revolutionary, pro-worker efforts contrasted completely with those of the liberal racists and their pro-genocide spectacle. The deadly Democrats trotted out international war criminals from the Clintons to the Obamas, all endorsing the nomination of Killer Kamala Harris for president in a desperate bid to save their declining U.S. empire in the face of fierce competition from imperialist rivals. Meanwhile, those of us in the summer project showed egalitarian communism in action: workers and students of all ages and genders striving to give leadership and act collectively.

Continued on page 8

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

EDITORIAL *Nazi Israel slaughters West Bank, nationalism is no solution..p 2*

KENTUCKY *Shut down slumlords & liberal racists...p 3*

'24 SUMMER PROJECT *Higlights from the DNC Summer Project'..p4*

LETTERS *'So what are you gonna do' ...p 6*

OUR FIGHT

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Nazi Israel slaughters West Bank, nationalism is no solution

Squeezed between Israel and Jordan on the west bank of the Jordan River, The West Bank is an open-air prison where nearly 3 million inhabitants can neither leave nor securely call their home. They are the surviving refugees and descendants of the Nakba of 1948. Today Jenin, a refugee camp known for it's history of working class resistance against apartheid, is under siege again further intensifying Israel's genocide underway in Gaza.

On August 28, Israel's genocidal rulers launched their biggest military raid of the occupied West Bank in more than twenty years. One week later, the Zionist stormtroopers have slaughtered more than thirty Palestinians in Jenin—a longtime flashpoint for anti-apartheid resistance—and other refugee camps. Roads and hospitals are devastated; families are cut off from electricity, water, sewage systems, and the internet. Amid mass evacuation orders, thousands have fled their homes. Since Israel laid siege to Gaza last October, the West Bank death toll stands at close to 700—most killed by Israel's military, others by racist Zionist settlers stealing all the land they can (news4jax.com, 9/4).

Israel's bosses say they're moving against "terrorists" and to block smuggled weapons from U.S. enemy Iran, a claim rejected by a top UN official. "I see a serious… parallel with what is happening on the Gaza Strip," said Francesca Albanese, the Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, "patterns of torture, of destruction, of extrajudicial killings, of uprooting" (msn.com, 9/1). Meanwhile, Joe Biden and his partner in war crime, Kamala Harris, keep pouring arms into the Zionists' bloodstained hands, including a $20 billion package approved last month. As the Benjamin Netanyahu regime escalates its state terror against children and workers in Palestine, total fatalities—including those killed by war-related disease—are nearing 200,000 (thelancet.com, 7/10), or more than 8 percent of Palestine's prewar population. Harris's shameless support for Israel's "right to defend itself" is a prescription for unchecked baby-killing and a generation of orphans.

At the same time, the threat of all-out conflict in the Middle East keeps growing. Competition to control the oil-rich region could easily lead to a nuclear conflagration and the next world war, with the U.S. and Europe on one side and China and Russia on the other. Millions of workers would be misled and coerced into killing their class sisters and brothers, all for one set of capitalist parasites or another.

Nationalism a dead end

Nationalism—including the Israeli nationalism known as Zionism—is toxic for the international working class. It divides workers while promoting false unity between workers and capitalist bosses. Nation states are instruments of racism, anti-immigrant violence, imperialist war, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. We must support the brave workers of Palestine/Israel and their heroic fightback against the Zionist/U.S. death machine.But as we've seen in so many courageous struggles of the past, from Vietnam and Indonesia to South Africa and Haiti, the antidote to nationalist poison can't be national liberation. It can't be the dead-end nationalism of Hamas and its self-serving capitalist leadership. The only cure is communist revolution, the violent overthrow of the profit system and the birth of a society run by and for the working class. Progressive Labor Party is committed to leading the working class to deliver that communist cure worldwide. Join us!

West Bank history of fightback

For nearly three million Palestinians, the West Bank is an open-air prison that they can neither leave nor securely call their home. Squeezed between Israel and Jordan on the west bank of the Jordan River, they are the surviving refugees and descendants of the Nakba of 1948, when the British and U.S. imperialists created the Israeli nation—and spurred the violent displacement of the Arab population that had lived and worked for centuries within the new country's borders. Since the Six-Day War of 1967, workers in the West Bank have been brutalized and oppressed by Israel's military occupation and the corrupt sell-outs who head the Palestinian Authority. To tighten their control, Israel's bosses encouraged Zionist settlers to seize the homes and fields of Palestinian families. Today, nearly 700,000 Israeli settlers live in heavily guarded, suburban-style neighborhoods. Their utilities and schools are provided by the Israeli government. They have Zionist-only malls and supermarkets and Zionist-only roads that cut off Palestinians from water sources, relatives, friends, and former neighbors. The settlers vote in Israeli elections and are protected on their stolen land by Israeli soldiers armed to the teeth (Chris Hedges, Substack, 7/12).

The Zionists have carved up and walled off so much of the West Bank that the "two-state solution," the magical policy embraced by lying snakes Biden and Harris, is a physical and political impossibility. For Netanyahu's Likud Party, there can be only one state—a Zionist state. According to Likud's coalition deal with the open nazis of the ultra-nationalist religious Zionism party, "the Jewish people have the exclusive and indisputable right to all parts of the Land of Israel," including "Judea and Samaria," the biblical term for the West Bank (The Times of Israel, 12/28/22). Members of Netanyahu's government are now openly plotting to annex the area (New York Times, 8/28).

The current working class fightback in the West Bank has a long history. In Jenin in the 1930's and '40's, before the partitioning of Palestine into Israel and Jordan, workers rebelled against the British colonizers. In the early 2000s, young workers in Jenin, many of them teenagers, led the Second Intifada, an uprising against the Israeli occupation. In 2002, a ten-day battle—longer than Israel's 1967 war against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan—killed 23 Israeli soldiers and 52 Palestinians (NY Times ,8/28).

The working class fightback in Palestine continues today, against huge odds, and has inspired workers worldwide. As we witness the Zionist bosses' atrocities with horror and rage, tens of thousands have come out to protest in solidarity with their class sisters and brothers. The looming global imperialist clash presents a great danger for all workers—but also a great opportunity as horror turns into consciousness and rage into insurrection. Our Party must be prepared to lead our class to revolution in the midst of war. However dark the horizon may seem, the future is red for the international working class.

Fight for communism!

For now, we workers must fight against the genocide of workers living under apartheid in Palestine. We must do all we can to build international support for those under mortal attack in the West Bank and Gaza. Harris and Trump represent different camps of capitalists, and so they have their disagreements. But when it comes to backing the despicable Israeli bosses, they have no real disagreement. Workers must not be trapped by the vague hope for a ceasefire in Palestine, or the myth of a "lesser evil" in this fall's U.S. elections. In the name of capitalist profit, both Democrats and Republicans plan to massacre many more workers in the Middle East—and, as war spreads and fascism rises, many millions around the globe. As Kamala Harris blustered in her acceptance speech at the Democrats' convention, "I will ensure America always has the strongest, most lethal fighting force in the world." As the potential next leader of the nation that wreaked the atomic holocausts in Japan and a genocide in Southeast Asia, she should be taken at her word.

But there's an alternative to the bosses' failing liberal democracy and its cynical, deadly choices: a revolutionary communist party. We must organize the working class not to build two states, or one state, but to smash all states in our fight for international communist revolution.

Kentucky

Shut down slumlords & liberal racists

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members from Kentucky organized a protest in downtown Corbin on Friday, August 30th to bring attention to rising rents and record evictions in the state. We also wanted to call out HB5, a bill which criminalizes homelessness, as an anti-worker bill supported by both Democrat and Republican legislators. The protest was sparked when local PL'ers noticed that a particular group of landlords, known as the Freeman Brothers, were notoriously infamous in Corbin for charging high rents and doing very little maintenance or upkeep on the properties they manage. The brothers are not just landlords, but also lawyers who own a property management business, a real estate brokerage, and have their own podcast. They have been known to make posts on social media websites such as Facebook, where they gloat about the negative attention that they receive from workers online who have seen their own rents go up as a result of the Freeman Brother's influence on the market. Freeman Brother's posts are often littered with comments from working-class tenants complaining and attacking the landlords for their disgusting behavior.

Under capitalism housing is not built to house people. It is built for profit as these two slumblord brothers very well illustrate.

Shutting scum landlords down with communist fightback

This was how local PLP members realized the need to organize a protest and bring these workers together so that they can realize their struggles are the same! The local PL'ers sprang into action before the summer came to an end by creating an event page with a flyer that had the PLP logo. By sharing it with friends on social media, the event page quickly got 52 responses because of the already existing hatred against the crooked landlord brothers. In addition to this, PL'ers went to properties managed by the Freeman Brothers and spoke with the local tenants, handing out flyers and explaining the causes behind this crisis and the need for workers to join together and fight back. The response was positive and many of the workers who we spoke to were in agreement with the need for a communist society run by and for the working-class.

At the protest we had a small turnout made up of PLP members from the area, members of the Madison County Tenant Union, as well as local residents. The turnout was smaller than expected, but despite this, PLP led the group of militant organizers out into the street where they marched to the Freeman Brother's Property Management office. We were shouting chants against landlords, capitalism, racism, and the Brothers themselves, linking together all these things as symptoms of the capitalist system which needs to be gotten rid of. When the protestors made it to the Property Management office, it was closed despite being during their business hours. The group decided to stand in front of the office anyway and chant, where many passing cars honked in support, and some workers even pulled over expressing their hatred for landlords and sympathy with our cause! We gave them copies of CHALLENGE and invited them to join us.

Liberals show their true, racist colors

Afterwards we returned to the park where the protest began and shared hotdogs that a PLP member cooked while having important discussions. One member gave a speech highlighting the absurdity of workers being the ones who built all of the houses, only to be forced to pay rent to landlords who produce nothing. This same comrade also called out the Democrats for supporting HB5, as well as the lackluster response from Andy Beshear, the Democratic governor of Kentucky who vetoed the bill, but in a letter, wrote that his concerns were the bill's lack of any plan for increased prison funding that would be needed to deal with increases in incarceration. "He claims to be against the criminalization of homelessness, but at the end of the day it's only under the condition that anti-working-class legislation isn't carried out logistically."

This same governor was also one of the potential candidates for Kamala Harris' VP pick, which makes sense as he has been a large supporter of police, and has also stood idly by as anti-trans legislation has been passed in Kentucky, and as abortion was banned. A worker at the protest in a discussion about electoralism as a route for change said "I think that's what's caused me to become cynical, following electoral politics and seeing very little change made." Another PLP member who works as a social worker gave a speech sharing her experiences seeing those who struggle with housing. Her speech was submitted as a letter to CHALLENGE. By the end of both comrades' speeches, they stressed that the reason housing was treated as a luxury and not a necessity is because of capitalism's drive for profit, and that in order to change this we need to fight for a communist society and join the PLP!

Worcester, MA

For Sonya Massey, smash racism

Worcester, MA, September 1— Progressive Labor Party (PLP), workers, and students rallied at City Hall against the racist and sexist murder of our class sister, Sonya Massey, a Black grandmother who should still be alive with her loved ones. Instead, she was shot in the face by killer KKKop Sean Grayson for the crime of being a Black woman in distress simply calling 911 to report suspicious activity outside her home. A grand jury indicted Grayson, but that does not mean much since far too many of our class brothers and sisters have met the same fate at the hands of the racist police. No politicians or apologists for capitalism can reform this cesspool of a system. A PL'er at the rally spoke and summed it up best when they said: only workers, students and soldiers can smash this racist system. Workers can shut it down at the point of production in the factories, hospitals, and offices, students can shut it down on college campuses and soldiers in the battlefield, in the air, and at the drone controls. She called on soldiers to turn their guns around and shoot the profit system down! She called for the abolition of borders and to fight for communist revolution!

Our literature table was well received, and CHALLENGEs and leaflets were distributed. Members of the community spoke at the open mic and shared their thoughts, and class anger about the murder of our class sister. A young, Black high-school student said, "We should be safe in our houses." A Latin woman said "I should be able to sit in my car and not be worried about getting shot by the police." Another woman said, "Here we are again at another rally mourning the loss of a Black person murdered by the police." Progressive Labor Party members led antiracist chants "Racism means, fight back!" "Same enemy, same fight, workers of the world unite" and called for an end to this profit system with communist revolution. This racist capitalist system has been murdering and terrorizing Black, Indigenous, and Latin workers for hundreds of years. As Progressive Labor Party has been saying for years, racism opens the door for attacks on all workers, and that is why we see attacks on the unhoused, mentally ill, students on the college campuses against the genocide in Gaza, and the attacks on unions, abortions, and healthcare. Inter-imperialist rivalry is intensifying between China and Russia and the U.S. rulers see their empire slipping away, so in order to hold on to their power and resources both here and abroad they need to keep us in line, and get us ready to fight their next war. We have to be united from the Mexican border, Haiti, Sudan, Ukraine, Gaza and Israel to smash this capitalist system.

Liberals show their true, racist colors

Our comrade who took leadership in organizing this rally, was fierce in his pursuit of making sure this demonstration took place and exposed the systemic nature of racism in Worcester. As a result, our multiracial rally had 45 members of the community attend. We called out the city bosses and police who are in lock-step with criminalizing our Black and Latin youth in public spaces. Another comrade spoke about the role of the police under capitalism. She said the cops are not your friends. They might help you cross the street, or play basketball with your kids, but don't be fooled. They are there to protect the ruling class and their property, and at the end of the day they will throw your child up against the wall after playing basketball with them. The kkkPD run a summer camp for Black and Latin kids in the city. These gutter racists refer to it"thug" camp or the "gang unit" of the Boys and Girls Club. She said the police should have nothing to do with the education or mentoring of our youth, especially our Black and Latin youth.

In Worcester, systemic racism is alive and well. The crime rate is at an all-time low nationally; according to the FBI there has been a 13 percent decline in homicides relative to 2022. (ABC News, March, 22, 2023.) But in Worcester, the police department made disproportionate numbers of arrests in Black and Latin neighborhoods. Progressive Labor Party and others have opposed these arrests. A report of an independent audit of the Worcester Police shows that arrests show systemic racism. The new police Chief stated that systemic racism has a negative impact and harms Black and Latin communities, but he is now walking back his comments. The City Manager has refused to hold hearings with the public about the report, and the Mayor has blocked efforts to investigate it. The City Councilor who heads the Public Safety Committee says systemic racism is not her job. This is an example of how the government protects the bosses and their profit system. It cannot be reformed. We have to fight for an egalitarian communist world and smash all borders, and end poverty! Fight for communism sisters and brothers! Join us!

Letters

Highlights from DNC Summer Project

See next issue for more letters

The following letters were written by PL'ers who participated in our annual summer project.

Though this is only my first Progressive Labor Party (PLP) Summer Project, I gained a lot of hope for the future through the strength of the Party's line and through the strength of all our comrades. I initially thought we would just be working on political education and mass agitation, however we learned so much about camaraderie and other things not taught in a classroom or on the picket line. Moreover, because it was at the Democratic National Convention (DNC), I expected to be integrated in protests for Palestine. However, PLP led these protests with energetic chants that set forth our line, but more importantly the Party joined workers on the Westside of Chicago and nurses at the University of Illinois-Chicago campus highlighting the Party's working class character and commitment.

Although the most inspiring strike was on the West Side, the nurse's strike left the most profound impact upon me. Union misleaders remained hostile to our support for the picket which was an eye opening experience for me. Furthermore, despite the union leadership's moderate stance, the nurses revealed the truth about working conditions and how the bosses cooperate with the courts and police in order to maintain exploitation. Nurses confided to me how the bosses utilized a court injunction in order to force emergency nurses back to work without a deal. They also explained how the hospital tries cutting costs through 'floater' nurses meant to care for patients across different floors, therefore taking the jobs of multiple nurses. Near the end of the strike, after being pushed out by union leadership, I met a linen worker on their break. We agreed how it was crazy and unacceptable how the nurses who save lives have to be forced to strike, while the police, courts, and bosses never strike. She also mentioned how travel nurses are being brought in to break the will of the strike and earn more. Lastly, she left me with a piece of advice: no matter how hard you work or how well you get along with your coworkers, the company has no interest in your wellbeing.

The Summer Project left me thinking about how across the country and throughout the world, all workers face the same cruel capitalist exploitation. However, knowing that all my comrades remain committed to the fight and can plan such a project left me hopeful. Now that the regular fight resumes back home, I can think of all the new comrades I met, and all they taught me, and depend on each other to motivate ourselves in the long struggle towards communism.

The Summer Project inspired confidence in the working class and their potential. My Chicago comrade made the concise and insightful observation that if we had the same number of people year round it would be a game changer. We need to work harder to build our base to the point where we can operate with the intensity of the Summer Project in class struggle all year long.

I noticed that at all the marches we attended our large group of multiracial, multigenerational communists marching and chanting together in a disciplined way attracted positive attention and curiosity from bystanders. They joined our chants and took our newspaper, which advanced our line.

This is my third summer project. The camaraderie of the Party is always very strong. It is not only inspiring to passersby; it is inspiring to all of us to be a part of the collectivity. We are all anxious to see our revolutionary theory and aspirations become a practical reality. The Democratic Party is also building their base with a false collectivity. We should have joined other protesters who were yelling at the Democrats as they left their events. We also should have engaged with jailed protestors to spread our line to other comrades who were impatient for revolution.

During our mass work there were two important confrontations. One confrontation was with the union misleadership at a picket line we canvassed. A paid union organizer told us that we were making workers feel unsafe. Half of us were intimidated but half of us continued talking with the workers including one comrade who asked the workers what do you think about us building a base in the working class. Many workers had militant ideas. One even told me "there's more of us than there are of them," showing advanced class consciousness. Another confrontation was with the nationalists. They were leading chants, and a comrade gave a speech against nationalism. They became violently agitated and attempted to physically fight a comrade but it turned out they were only a handful of people and after they settled down there was no issue. I was intimidated during the confrontation but after it was over I realized it was the right thing to do. We should build base year round collectively so that we can obtain the numerical strength for the revolutionary practice necessary to make our theory a reality.

This past week I was able to attend the DNC Summer Project. Something that stuck out to me was meeting new comrades who were my age. I am a college student and my campus is very disconnected and nothing really happens here. I've tried to talk to people about communism but they ultimately do not care or have had bad experiences with other so called communist parties when they have visited my campus a handful of times. Even when the faculty was on strike, there was maybe one other student I saw at the strike, even though they were striking against our tuition hikes along with their raises. This experience on campus has been so disheartening because I felt like there was no one out there that was interested in what I was saying.

This Summer Project however, completely got rid of that feeling for me. For the bulk of the project, I found myself talking to the younger comrades in attendance, most of them college students like me. Ideas and conversations came so naturally and it felt like we had been friends for years already. We formed circles of support while distributing CHALLENGE, we stuck together during marches, and our conversations came together to show us how similar all our struggles are even though we are all from different places. In the marches we went to, especially the last one, people were very receptive to our chants. Our flags caught the attention of many people and this encouraged me to fight harder back home to build a base. While this work will never be easy, it is insanely necessary and I am proud to be doing it alongside all of my comrades. The Party brings together so many different people from so many different backgrounds which highlights the fact that this truly is the Party of the workers. Regardless of age, race, gender, we all are here to fight for the same thing and that will unite and strengthen us for years to come.

Having discovered the Party in an isolated part of California, there were many members I hadn't met, and many protests that Progressive Labor Party (PLP) instigated/participated in that I hadn't been a part of. The 2024 Summer Project changed that, and I saw a wonderful part of PLP's work and struggle: protest. Protests alongside already existing groups, such as a nurses union from the largest hospital in Chicago, an organization fighting for reparations of previously incarcerated Black workers, and pro-Palestinian leftist organizations protesting against the Democrats at their convention. Our chants and our speeches were inspirational and hopeful, bringing together these crowds of diverse groups to see that we must fight for communism, to achieve all that these groups have been organizing and working for. The feeling of community in Chicago was exhilarating, but I understand it is also fleeting as we all retreat back to our home bases. I hold on to that feeling, though, to spread the message of communism here in my base, and awaken other workers struggling every day to a message: that the only true solution is a communist revolution.

One of my favorite moments from the DNC was when some of us comrades were heading to the first march and a group of pro-Palestine protesters boarded the same railcar. Without hesitation, they started up some of their chants and we joined in. We then added our chants to the mix, and went back and forth before one comrade said, "I have a real hook... The only solution is a communist revolution!" Enthusiastically, they repeated this chant, giving me confidence that many workers would be receptive to the Party's message.

A few days later, however, we were met with some who weren't so receptive. When joining a nurses' strike, we were asked by one of the union leaders to not pass out literature. He even went as far as to say we were making the other nurses uncomfortable, which largely, was not the case. Many took a CHALLENGE newspaper and were willing to have conversations with us. Later that day, we went back to the DNC and were faced with other leftist groups as well as nationalist groups that were trying to get their own points across. However, by the end of the night, we were the ones carrying the chants amongst the sea of groups marching along us. We denounced fascism ("They not like us!"), called for an international revolution, and even sang Bella Ciao. On the way back home, one comrade started a conversation with some curious transit workers that resulted in each of them taking a flier, a conversation as smooth as the chants we had voiced on the train a few days prior. Having gone full circle, I have a newfound appreciation for Chicago's transit system and its abilities to unite our class. I've also learned to not be discouraged by naysayers because every worker knows that deep down they have more power than the bosses, and every worker needs Progressive Labor Party to foster that idea.

The 2024 DNC Summer Project, organized by the Progressive Labor Party, reaffirmed my commitment to communist ideas , base building and pro-working class optimism. I witnessed a rising fifth grader's clarity and sense of understanding of the phrase capitalist versus communist society in a study group. I saw a dozen or more fresh leaders of the international working class in their 20s. I saw the fight for our line that replacing one set of bosses' nationalism for another is a dead end. My commitment grew from the study groups, to the Israelism movie discussion, to the Thursday DNC protest march.

Encouraging each other to do the difficult but urgent work of struggling with workers around us to choose communism instead of voting in the upcoming elections for global war vs civil war. Staying with eight other comrades from 19 to 60 years old. Asian, Latin, Black, and white, living together for a week. Traveling from different places. Brimming with communist hope, sweetness, so much wisdom, and a lot, a lot of laughter as we shared our hardships, cooked, invented sandwiches, watched the Minions movie and made ice cream from scratch. The political peak was at the DNC protest march on Thursday. Early on, when the march hadn't gone for too long, a comrade on a blow horn started chanting "Death! Death! Death to the Bosses! Power! Power! Power to the Workers!" It felt like it wired comrades and masses of workers around us alike. I felt like PLP was getting at how I and others around me felt and thought about capitalism and its horrendous bosses. Eventually, so many communists were unleashed. Gliding between taking on the weight of the multiple megaphones, to switching up the responsibility of leading the chants through the mic and giving spontaneous speeches, to the countless comrades who took multiple CHALLENGE newspapers and PLP leaflets and started weaving through the crowds of hundreds to the front, left, right, and back of us to distribute our literature. At some point we burst out into singing Bella Ciao as a drumline behind us joined.

After listening to other reflections during the closing barbecue of the summer project I was left with the following thoughts: Feelings, such as the communist affirming ones I felt during the summer project are great but fleeting. Continuously steeling ourselves with communist fightback and base building is necessary to grow those feelings. Capitalism takes a lot from us, but the one thing we get to choose that the bosses cannot take away, is choosing to fight for communism. Now, I have come back to my part of the world, recommitted to igniting the communist sparks in more of the workers around me. I specifically make the commitment to help run or start a student club to extend what the PLP makes me feel about myself to others and honor my commitment. I encourage others to join and inspire us in finding more ways to commit to the lifelong fight for communist revolution!

Speech

‘We believe we can win communism’

During our summer project fighting the bosses’ liberal stooges at the Democratic National Convention (DNC), Progressive Labor Party (PLP) comrades participated in a march for reparations. While reformist in nature, the group that organized the march is open to communist ideas. After the march, one comrade spoke on what reparations could look like for Black workers (and all workers) under an egalitarian world, beyond extra crumbs the ruling class is willing to give to quell fightback. Some phrases are bolded to emphasize they were call and response.

I am here from Brooklyn, New York. I was born in Chicago and I’m here today with the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party.

I am going to ask one more time, what are we here for?

(Reparations!)

We are here for reparations.

I am going to speak to reparations from a communist vantage point and try to inject some revolutionary hope into this situation.

Because, everything you see around here, every brick, every mortar, every automobile, every wheel you see turning on every bus and every plane that flies overhead, it was all built through our labor, the labor of our class, the working class.

And so, a communist vision of reparations says -

And this comes back to me from after George Floyd was killed by the fascist murderous cops, and after George Floyd was killed by the fascist murderous cops, it was Tim Walz who was the governor of Minnesota who brought in the National Guard to smash the antiracist protesters of Minneapolis so never be fooled about what’s going on just a mile or two from here right now, and who’s coming to power. It is the enemy that is coming to power.

Workers will take it all!

That’s why I’m so happy to be here with y’all today.

I marched around the DNC the other day. This was a better march. This is where the power is at. Places like the West Side of Chicago.

And if you’ll allow me to, I’d like to speak to borders today, I’d like to speak to forced migrations, and I’d like to speak to a hated institution of Chicago’s West Side, an institution my family knows and hates - the Cook County Jail.

Because a communist understanding of reparations says this -

We made it all,

(WE’LL TAKE IT ALL!)

When we were marching down Broadway, through the heart of the business district in New York City, every single store was locked, boarded up with plywood because they were scared, afraid that we would take their property.

And when we raise that chant there, people take it up, it makes sense to people.

Reparations, though unlikely, would bring some comfort - but let’s aim higher, for workers power, that’s communism

And that’s reparations.

Now the ruling class that causes the pain that this sister just conveyed to us, of not being able to go home, of crossing a border and never being able to go back, these borders that they have now, I’ll go back a little while, I’m a history teacher, and I admire the history teacher who spoke before. So many important things have been said today by so many people. I’ll go back to the origins of capitalism - when Cortez reached the shores of what we now call Mexico, were they worried about a border when they went in for the conquest and massacre of the Aztec people?

(NO!)

When they went to the coast of West Africa and dragged our people out of the continent, were they thinking about borders then?

(NO!)

Their system was built on snatching people from their homes and putting us into forced migrations and forced labor across the globe.

And now they want us to fight for their borders and look at people who are migrants and have come here, when their profit system is in terminal decline.

Working class struggles are united worldwide

These same rulers want to turn us against migrants some of whom have walked here from as far as Venezuela.

Walked here.

And to this a class conscious worker shouts NO!

We are one international working class,

We shall not be divided,

We shall not be turned against our class brothers and sisters,

We shall have the kind of unity that this brother over here was speaking to,

And our awakening to that truth is their greatest fear.

That’s why they called on their brutal police to attack the encampments of young people on the college campuses.

Because they are afraid that we identify with the entrapped, imprisoned, forcibly removed people of Gaza, forcibly removed not so differently than our ancestors who were forcibly removed from the shores of Africa hundreds of years ago, not so different from our people who have been forcibly removed from Latin America through U.S. imperialism decimating their economies, they have been forcibly removed.

And in Cook County Jail what we have today are the descendants of the forcibly removed. Forcibly removed from Africa, forcibly removed from the Jim Crow south, like my father’s family who had to flee the KKK, we are the descendants of the forcibly removed. Our Latin brothers and sisters share a similar history. And listen here, these workers today that we call white, hundreds of years ago they were forcibly driven out of Europe by this same capitalist system which left them nothing. They were peasants who got on boats and came here. This history of forced removal is something that the workers of the world have in common.

And these brothers and sisters in Cook County Jail, there are about five thousand of them now. At it’s 2013 peak that jail contained 11,000 individuals. Every month hundreds are released having stayed 26 days, on average, released with no charges. Having done nothing, totally innocent, trapped, languishing.

11,000 spots? Give me 11,000 spots. We have room for the generals, we have room for the Congressmen, we have room for the CEO’s who are funding and carrying out genocide and we gather all the worst organizers of the capitalist assault on our natural world and we lock them all up, right there in Cook County Jail, 11,000 we would have a safer world.

And the brothers and sisters languishing there now,

Set them free!

Smashing capitalism is the ultimate reparation!

Because if we explain to each and every incarcerated individual in that jail why we need their bunk because we have to lock up Jamie Dimond, we have to lock up Elon Musk, we have to lock up the capitalists who are driving us into war, genocide and climate catastrophe, we need your cell and bed to lock up our class enemy. And then we take these brothers and bring them back to the community, and we surround them with love, and hope and importance, and meaning,

Then we will have safety.

Who keeps us safe?

We keep us safe!

And when I think about this communist future,

I believe that we will win!

Elections: Capitalist myth vs working-class truth

Working with “progressive” people against the Palestine genocide, we realized that we saw many misleaders of these groups trying to win people to the importance of elections. When we raised questions, these "leaders" responded with their version of history, citing several historical examples to make the case for how voting makes change. In this article we are challenging their version of history which is essentially capitalist with a working class understanding of what actually happened.

Capitalist Revisionist History 101: Elections help the working class

Working Class History: Capitalists' fears of revolt and revolution is what helps win reforms for workers—not elections. And of course, reforms disappear-- frequently and violently.

Myth 1: Franklin Delano Roosevelt “gave” the working class Social Security in 1935.

What really happened:

Communist led workers in the 1930s were fighting, often violently, to organize unions and against the ravages of the Great Depression. Workers were being shot at and also shooting back. Workers saw the still socialist Soviet Union as a beacon of hope, but capitalists feared the real possibility of communist revolution spreading to the U.S. and in China workers seized power led by communists.

For the rulers one frightening example was International Unemployment Day (March 6, 1930). Hundreds of thousands of people in major cities around the world took to the streets to protest mass unemployment associated with the Great Depression. In June of 1932, nearly 20,000 World War I veterans from across the country marched on the United States Capitol to request early payment of cash bonuses. President Herbert Hoover had to order out the U.S. Army to disperse them and their families.

Because of these and similar actions then, we do have Social Security now - a Social Security that does not provide a comfortable retirement for workers. The average Social Security benefit is about $1900 dollars a month. The average rent in the U.S. is $1700 a month.

Like all social systems capitalism is not forever. The future is communism where the working class rules all aspects of society with no racism, no sexism, no inequality and no money.

MYTH 2: Lyndon Johnson gave us the Civil Right Act because Martin Luther King backed him.

What really happened:

Continued on page 7

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

‘So what are you gonna do?’

At my transit quarters, it is in the back room, away from our supervisor, where the workers’ ideas are shared. Today my coworker shared his struggles with money; like many of us he’s waiting for the over time (ot) to return.

It hasn’t been consistent in four months. Most workers depend on overtime to keep their heads above water, with rising prices of gas, rent increases, etc. My coworker, Mohammed, said he had to borrow from his pension to make repairs to his home but needs more money to finish it. My other coworker, Satana said,”make a Youtube video. Everyone who’s struggling can make it easy; they just have to be creative.” Rolling my eyes, I said, “You can’t expect that to work for everyone.” He said “yes.” I told him “there are over two billion people living in extreme poverty. That means they live on less than $3 a day, they surely don’t have phones.” My other coworker, Jackson, said “That’s the problem with capitalism. It keeps the rich making money and the poor, always needing money.” Santana said,”yeah, that’s why they need to fix that problem of capitalism.” I said, “capitalism can’t be fixed, it’s working perfectly the way it was designed to.” Jackson said, “capitalism doesn’t work for us.” So I asked him, “So what are you gonna do on election day?” He said, “ probably vote for Harris.” I said, “why?” He continued, “because I like her running mate. What’s his name again, Tim something hmm… ahh Walz!” I asked, “why do you like him?” He continued, “because he seems nice and level headed.” I said, “he’s no better than Harris, things will only get worse under them.” “We’ll see,” he said. It appears I have my work cut out for me. We all need to get an early start and make sure no worker sees any one of these racists as a choice for the working class.

How I make small gains in a big protest

On August 18th I and other comrades took part in the National Day of Action demonstration in Brooklyn, NY. This demonstration was called by several groups including DSA, Jewish Voicefor Peace, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and others to take place as the Democratic National Convention was starting in Chicago, IL. Most people there were angry about the genocide taking place in Gaza.

Although our main work is with those we know in mass organizations, where we work, go to school or where we live, participation in rallies like this one are useful in putting forth our ideas among folks we wouldn’t meet otherwise. I always bring pen and paper to get contact info and ask for donations to help pay for the next edition of our paper!

Collectively our Party group distributed between 300-350 CHALLENGEs. The response to our efforts was very positive. I always ask for donations for the paper and this time I got $56.00.

Other comrades got donations as well. In addition, four people gave me their contact information to find out more about Progressive Labor Party.

AIPAC doesn’t direct U.S. imperialism

I think there is one misleading phrase in the editorial of Sept.4. It states that “neither Harris nor Biden has the spine to defy the Zionist lobby,…AIPAC.” The implication is that Israel determines the foreign policy of the U.S. It is actually the U.S. that needs Israel, which is the only reliable U.S. ally in the Middle East since the fall of the Shah of Iran and the recent waffling of Saudi Arabia between China and the U.S. Israel is essential as a base to protect the fossil fuel resources and transit routes in the area, the extremely important shipping lanes of the Suez Canal, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, as a bulwark against local nationalist and extremist movements and the power of Iran, and has given the U.S. cover in dealing with unpopular actors such as apartheid South Africa and the Contras. AIPAC is useful for buying politicians and limiting their critiques of Israel, but that is a secondary role, not what determines U.S. needs. We need this understanding to be clearly understood that no presidential candidate will decrease support for Israel, lobbies aside.

Loved the organizing, write more!

I loved the article about our Kentucky friends organizing at the Republican National Convention in August. They described in detail how they distributed CHALLENGE, engaged people in conversations, even reaching out to people who identified with other parties. Their efforts showed how multiracial unity is possible! While at the Convention, the cops brutally killed another Black man. Our friends immediately mobilized to protest this killing, showing a great deal of flexibility and commitment. The article provided many examples for others to follow. I hope we hear from them again!

Glossary

Capitalists compete by any means necessary. Much like smaller criminal gangs, different groups of capitalists battle one another to secure territory, resources, and exploitable labor–the basis of their profits.They have created the state as a mechanism to manage and protect this ruthless profit-driven system. Through laws, police, prisons, elections, the military, schools, the media, and other institutions, the bosses have built a dictatorship to keep themselves in power—and keep the working class out of power.

Fascism is a stage of late capitalism in crisis where the liberal democratic veil peels away to reveal a rotting dictatorship. The bosses use state terror to discipline their own class and enforce compliance by the working class–both essential conditions for waging global war. Fascism is marked by more direct and centralized rule, with intensified racism, sexism, and nationalism.

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalists, principally the multinational banks and oil companies (JPMorganChase, ExxonMobil). They’re trying to build a multiracial, patriotic coalition to back U.S. imperialism and protect their far-flung profits. This is the wing that plays the drums of World War III.

The **Small Fascists** are mostly domestically oriented capitalists, spearheaded by the Koch, Mercer, DeVos, and Coors families, along with Richard Mellon Scaife, Harry and Lynde Bradley, John Olin, Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, Rupert Murdoch and a cast of other billionaires. They want to cut taxes for short-term profits and are reluctant to invest in costly ground wars to defend the global U.S. empire. Their agenda includes a racist gutting of social services at home and a retreat from U.S. imperialist alliances, including NATO.

Let’s organize for communism: the world we wish to see

In August we held our annual Progressive Labor Party (PLP) BBQ! Even though it was muggy and hot - it was upbeat and well attended! Long time supporters and friend—along with those who we have recently met—enjoyed the delicious grilled food along with potluck items generously contributed! Workers of all ages, races and nationalities shared in friendly political discussion! Children played and enjoyed the play structure and bouncy house!

Sharing stories of struggle

Four comrades involved in organizing the BBQ spoke to the group.

The first comrade welcomed everyone - He explained that we are a party for communist revolution. We don’t vote, we organize! We fight to unite workers of all races and nationalities in one party that believes in an egalitarian society in which the wealth is shared! He welcomed the speakers!

The second comrade spoke about his experience coming to the U.S. as a teen with his family and meeting the PLP. Then when his family faced a harrowing racist attack, PLP helped them fight back. He spoke about the need to support and welcome refugees and immigrants who are enduring great adversity. He went on to describe the role of the U.S. and other imperialist powers in creating the conditions that lead to global migration.

Another speaker, a school nurse, spoke about the struggle of fighting for safe staffing in the health office and classroom as a union member. And the difficult struggle of organizing for reforms while at the same time fighting for a communist society.

Finally we bring you the inspiring speech of a comrade who recently joined the Progressive Labor Party:

“Four years ago, I began questioning why we had two options for the next President of the United States and I had to make a choice based on which of these candidates was less evil. Not even "good enough", not even "ok", but literally LESS EVIL. That question led me on a whole journey of discovery of both learning and unlearning our history, the forces that drive change, and what my role as a working class person can be.

Capitalism is evil and it's infected us globally. Where there is profit, there is exploitation. Where there is exploitation there is suffering.

My grandfather worked his whole life in a factory making minimum wage, as a gas station attendant, and as a Sears salesman. He worked these three jobs at times simultaneously. The people who say you just have to work hard enough to be "blessed" by wealth are lying - this reminds me of the George Carlin line: "we call it the American Dream because you have to be asleep to believe it." My grandfather worked incredibly hard. At the end of his life my grandfather said "I wish I had never been born" in regards to how hard his life was. And it was hard for what? So the factory owners, the top few people at Sears could live a life of leisure and luxury?

Join PLP, organize, and fight for communism

Right now capitalism is the air we breathe and the water we swim in. It's hard to see it for how common it is. But people created capitalism and we can destroy it. I’m not going to vote - I am going to organize. My vote means nothing to capitalists who throw millions of dollars to the person who best represents their interests – not ours. No liberals have ever just given the working class something. It was only after massive rebellions and strikes and civil unrest that they tried to pacify us with reform. And they do this because they are scared of us. And they should be.

That is why I joined the Progressive Labor Party – an international party. A party that is uniting workers all over the world. We want to see a world that is not run by the capitalists, that is not driven by profits at the expense of the lives of the rest of us - the working class. As a mom with young children I want to see a world where we are all surviving, we are all equal, we are all able to enjoy the one life we have to live.

I’m going to help organize a movement where workers can unite and resist. I’m going to help educate others just like me through discussion and study groups (starting one too!). I will fight sexism, nationalism, and racism – the tools of oppression. I will resist the cynicism instilled by the capitalist class that we aren’t strong enough or capable or “good” enough to mobilize and fight back. And I hope to be a part of the largest global revolution in history. I hope you will consider joining me.

Thank you friends and comrades, for being here on our day of organizing and friendship!”

Elections: myths vs truths

Continued from page 5

At the beginning of the 1960s, antiracists were marching, boycotting, sitting-in and picketing against police and white supremacist violence. Starting in 1964 in NY and led by Progressive Labor Party comrades, there were over 250 rebellions against both police brutality and protests against countless evictions which were forcing poor workers into the streets.

The Civil Rights Act was in response to these angry demonstrations. While it might have temporarily improved the lot of Black workers, most of these changes have disappeared.

Today, the working class, particularly Black and Latin workers, is worse off. The number of Black and Latin prisoners in the U.S. grew tremendously over the years. Today, 25 percent of all the prisoners in the world are in the United States! The U.S. has only 5 percent of the world's population. Voting protections are gone in many states. Racism is alive and thriving. When workers take power, that's communism, we will eliminate racism once and for all.

MYTH 3: A wider Vietnam War was avoided by electing Lyndon Johnson as President over "extremist" Goldwater.

What really happened:

No wider war was one of Johnson's statements prior to the election. The Vietnam War went from 23,000 troops to 536,100 troops under Johnson. Vietnamese were herded into fortified "hamlets" with promises that were never met. They found concentration camp like living conditions. Many villages were burned by U.S. troops because they were suspected of harboring the Vietcong. In the village of My Lai, U.S. troops were photographed murdering elders, women and children. This also happened in many of these hamlets.

Agent Orange, containing dioxin, was used extensively resulting in over 400,000 Vietnamese people dying from exposure. Over 300,000 U.S. soldiers also died from exposure. Though it was stopped in 1971, dioxin still persists in soils, water, sediment, fish, aquatic species, and the food supply,

Black soldiers, thrust by racism into front line units, were killed and wounded at a much higher rate than white soldiers in Vietnam. Black soldiers led and organized with white soldiers to oppose the Vietnam War even in the Army.

Today profiteering nationalist wars span the globe and world war is closer than ever. Our goal in the Progressive Labor Party is to turn imperialist world war into a class war of workers against the capitalists. Power to the working class.

Voting for Kamala Harris will not save Black, Brown, and gender queer workers from Trump's Small Fascist attacks .After all, it's genocide Joe Biden and Holocaust Kamala Harris Liberal Democrats unconditionally bankrolling Israeli apartheid and genocide. The Democrats are the the bigger fascists with the most vested interests in launching a devastating global imperialist war, making them the main threat to our class from Gaza to Sudan, to the U.S. The only way to save ourselves from the fate of genocide and fascism we must organize an international working class movement to smash their lethal system and build the communist world the international working class deserves..

Myth 4: Nelson Mandela was elected President of South Africa on April 27, 1994, signaling the official ending of apartheid in that nation. Mandela was a "hero", imprisoned for years, and leader of the African National Congress party (ANC).

What really happened:

Mandela made a deal with South Africa's white capitalist rulers, who were feeling the economic effects of external sanctions and internal pressures. In return for his freedom, ending the ban on the ANC, repealing apartheid legislation, and granting free elections, the ANC would cease their agitation and guerilla activity, and capitalism and the capitalists would continue. There were thousands of soldiers ready to fight massing in Botswana at the time.

As a result of this deal, the ANC has been the ruling party in South Africa until this year. What has that meant for most of the majority Black population? Nearly half the adult population of South Africa lives in poverty, with women and those living in rural areas, overwhelmingly Black, most affected. Because of the AIDS denying, and money-saving beliefs of Black millionaire Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's President from 1999 to 2008, South Africans suffered an unnecessary 330,000 AIDS deaths. Today, whether in terms of wages, wealth, or consumption, South Africa places among the world's most unequal countries. Many of the corporations are still owned by the same white capitalists.

The lesson: whether racist white capitalists or Black nationalist capitalists, they are all murderers. The only solution is communist revolution -- no bosses, no money, everyone sharing both scarcity and plenty. This is what Progressive Labor Party is fighting for. Join us!

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Shifting imperialist alliances in Asian Pacific

France24, 8/28–Pacific Island leaders endorsed a landmark regional policing plan Wednesday at a summit in Tonga, a contentious move seen as trying to limit China's security role in the region. Leaders unveiled a plan to create up to four regional police training centres and a multinational crisis reaction force, backed by $271 million in initial funding from Australia. Under the plan, a corps of about 200 officers drawn from different Pacific Island nations could be dispatched to regional hot spots and disaster zones when needed and invited. "This demonstrates how Pacific leaders are working together to shape the future that we want to see," said Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, hailing the agreement.

The Australian leader made the announcement while flanked by leaders of Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea and Tonga -- a symbolic show of unity in a region riven by competition between China and the United States…Wednesday's announcement was a diplomatic victory for Australia and for the Pacific Islands Forum, a regional bloc which had appeared deeply divided on the topic. China's Pacific allies -- most notably Vanuatu and Solomon Islands -- had voiced concern that the policing plan represented a "geo-strategic denial security doctrine", designed to box out Beijing.

Israeli military expands war into West Bank

Al Jazeera, 8/31–The Palestinian news agency Wafa reports that Israeli airstrikes near the al-Ahli Arab Hospital (Baptist Hospital) have killed two Palestinians and wounded others. Citing local sources, it reported that Israeli fighter jets had targeted the perimeter of the hospital, and emergency and rescue teams were still working to retrieve the fatalities and casualties… Israeli settlers mounted a large-scale opening fire on the villagers…

The Jenin Government Hospital announced it had suspended its daily dialysis services due to ongoing disruptions in essential supplies caused by the Israeli military siege of the city, according to Wafa, the Palestinian news agency. The hospital has been under Israeli military siege for the past four days, leading to severe operational challenges, Wafa reported…Israeli forces had damaged the electricity supply line to the hospital, and the backup generators have been running continuously for four days.

War in Gaza tracks with rising anti-Muslim racism

Brookings, 8/27–After years of improvement, American public attitudes toward Muslims and Islam have declined in the past few months, and expressed public prejudice toward Muslims remains higher than toward any other religious, ethnic, or racial group studied. These are two of the key findings in our latest University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll (UMDCIP)...after years of improvement, favorable views of Muslims and Islam have declined in the two polls we have carried out in 2024. Favorable views of Muslims dropped to 64% from 78% in 2022, returning to 2016 levels; favorable attitudes toward Islam dropped to 48%...The drop in favorable views of Muslims occurred among both Democrats and Republicans, but it is notable that the drop in favorable views of Islam was more pronounced among Democrats.

Russia and China combine military forces to challenge U.S.

New York Times, 8/13–China and Russia have pressed an informal political and economic alliance against the West. Now they are stepping up the cooperation between their militaries with increasingly provocative joint war games. Chinese and Russian long-range bombers patrolled together near Alaska for the first time last month. Days earlier, the countries held live-fire naval drills in the hotly contested South China Sea for the first time in eight years. And they have more frequently buzzed the skies and sailed the waters together near Taiwan, Japan and South Korea, where America has strategic interests.

The military exercises are, in some ways, the most vivid expression of an alignment between China's top leader, Xi Jinping, and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia as they have sought to challenge their chief geopolitical rival, the United States…To Washington, the exercises sow doubts about whether the United States could prevail in a war in Asia against the combined forces of China and Russia. While American war planners have long considered scenarios with China and Russia individually, they have paid less attention to the prospect of the two nuclear-armed states fighting together because it had long seemed so unlikely.

REJECT HOLOCAUST HARRIS, CHOOSE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALISM

Left: 8 red flags flying high on the last day of Democratic National Convention protest. Right: a comrade made this lovely sign depicting our line on Palestinian liberation which can only mean communist internationalism not nationalist liberation.

Continued from page 1

Summer projects like these are the perfect opportunity to expand our revolutionary movement, our base in the working class, and our limits as a Party. While the bosses in the U.S. and around the world can only offer different brands of fascism to the working class, PLP remains YOUR international Party for a future free of racism, sexism, and world war!

Jumping into the struggle

Our project formally kicked off Monday morning, as our local collective held a welcoming event for all participants. We gave a rundown of the week's activities and shared our goals of sharp agitation, building camaraderie, and political education. Equally important, we stressed the necessity of having security plans and collective discipline in the face of potential violence from the bosses' police state.

This planning was essential as we jumped right into the first scheduled mass rally and march against the DNC that afternoon in a park near the convention site. Among thousands of workers and students, PL'ers seized the opportunity to engage our class and distribute hundreds of copies of CHALLENGE newspaper and other literature.

After hours of congregating in the park, the march was finally mobilized to begin. Our PLP contingent kept tight ranks behind our banner of "No War but Class War," using our own marshals to keep pace. We had multiple bullhorns on hand to lead chants calling for internationalism over so-called "revolutionary" nationalism. We also called for the necessity of communist revolution.

A number of comrades made speeches in between chants, including a newer PL'er who gave her first Party speech! Once the march reached its end point, we returned in groups to our original briefing place where we socialized and created some revolutionary art to use in our actions through the rest of the week.

Base building and class struggle over voting

Day two of the project began with the first of two scheduled study groups, centered around PLP's foundational document "Build a Base in the Working Class." Unlike the bosses' dishonest relationships with the working class, in which they make empty promises and outright lies to mobilize workers to vote, the Party strives to develop deep personal connections with workers to build a foundation for revolution. Comrades shared personal experiences in our small groups of how we embed our own lives in the working-class struggle and build confidence in our class's potential to win power.

This discussion dovetailed well with our event that same evening, a mass forum titled "Don't Vote, REVOLT!" The forum championed the international working class and revolutionary action as the real source of social progress over the bosses' bogus elections. Two comrades gave a fiery presentation to kick off the discussion, before we broke into smaller groups to share historical and personal examples of class struggle being the engine of change. We came back together to share discussions as a group before a veteran PL'er gave a rousing speech for everyone to build PLP!

Struggling beyond reforms and nationalism

Day three kept up the pace with our collective joining forces with an organization on the west side of Chicago which has been pushing for the U.S. bosses to provide reparations to Black workers and families who had their lives destroyed by the arch-racist "War on Drugs." Although as communists we have doubts about the likelihood of capitalism to ever remotely address the harm it has unleashed on Black workers, we were proud to participate in the group's march to build ties with our fellow workers, talk politics, give speeches and lead chants.

Later in the afternoon, we dove deep into discussions of internationalism, first with another study group on the topic and later with a movie night where we watched the documentary Israelism about Jewish soldiers and workers rejecting the Zionist state. Given the overwhelmingly nationalist tone of the mass movement against the genocide in Palestine, it remains essential that we continue to debate and sharpen our line on what communist internationalism means in theory and practice.

Finish strong for the working class

For our final full day, we jumped right into a picket line at a local hospital where over 1,000 nurses were on strike. We unfortunately ran into some anti-communist attitudes from the union hacks and some nurses, but overwhelmingly our Party was well-received, allowing us to have good conversations and make some contacts.

By the evening, we were fired up for the final mass march on the DNC, coinciding with Harris accepting the nomination. Even compared with the previous march, there was a noticeable rise in the energy and enthusiasm in which our collective – stimulated largely by the youth – engaged with all workers present. Beyond getting CHALLENGE into the hands of countless marchers, we set the tone with our multiracial group and militant chants. We even riffed off a popular track: "Kamala, she a genocide cop! She not like us!"

Dare to struggle, dare to win

Although many of us are leaving Chicago and heading back to our areas, we realize the need to keep up the same urgency and collectivity where we're at. Although our Party is still small, our communist ideas and leadership remain the only solution to this nightmare of capitalism and will one day be wielded by billions to take power! Dare to struggle, dare to win!

WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is night of Friday,September 13

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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